

## Southern Appalachian Creature Feature Podcasts

### Muddy Sneakers

Greetings and welcome to the Southern Appalachian Creature Feature – this week we'll look at new movement to get kids outdoors.

The early-morning rumble of diesel school buses echoes across the mountains again as another summer comes to a close and students head to school in stiff new jeans and spotless sneakers. Talk to a teacher about their work and the conversation eventually winds its way to testing and how it defines what gets taught. Parallel to that is a growing concern that kids are spending less time outdoors than ever. The pressure to pass standardized tests and the desire to get kids outside may seem contradictory, but for some it's an opportunity.

Muddy Sneakers is a new non-profit working to get kids outside to learn science, math, and other subjects. Working with local schools, the program takes 5th and 8th graders outside twelve days over the course of a school year, each visit with a lesson that follows North Carolina education standards while engaging students in the outdoors. Depending on where their school is located, the students will visit DuPont State Forest, Gorges State Park, Montreat, or Panthertown Valley in Nantahala National Forest.

This fall Muddy Sneakers will have programs in Transylvania, Buncombe, Henderson, and Jackson Counties, and hopes to eventually grow to have chapters across the state. For more information about Muddy Sneakers, visit [www.muddysneakers.org](http://www.muddysneakers.org).

For WNCW and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, this is Gary Peeples.